

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (original): A method for initiating communication in real-time between two users in a multi-user communication environment, the method comprising:

providing a unique code to a first user, the code being transmitted by the first user to a second user outside of the multi-user communication environment;

whereby the second user initiates real-time and secure communication with the first user after the code is authenticated in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 2 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the unique code is provided by the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 3 (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 4 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code is transmitted by the first user through at least one of an email program, a telephone conversation, a handwritten note, a chat room program, direct communication, a instant message program, and a facsimile.

Claim 5 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the first user initiates real-time and secure communication with the second user after the code is authenticated in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of symbols.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of alpha-numeric symbols.

Claim 8 (withdrawn): A method for interaction in a multi-user communication environment, the method comprising:

selecting at least one of a word or a phrase from a first menu having a plurality of words and phrases, the selected word or phrase enabling a second menu comprising a plurality of words and phrases; and

forming a string by selecting at least one of a word or a phrase from the second menu; wherein the formed string is communicated to at least one of a user or a program in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein the string is a sentence.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein the string is a query.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein at least one of the word or the phrase in the first menu is updated by the environment.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein at least one of the word or the phrase in the second menu is updated by the environment.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein the word or phrase is communicated to the user by way of player character animation.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein the word or phrase is communicated to the user by being audibilized through use of a speaker.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 8, wherein the word or phrase is communicated to the user by being presented textually on a display.

Claim 16 (original): A multi-user communication environment for real-time and secure communication between two users, the environment comprising:

 a server for authenticating a unique code entered by a first user;
 said server allowing real-time and secure communication between the first and a second user in the multi-user communication environment after the code is authenticated.

Claim 17 (original): The multi-user communication environment according to claim 16, wherein the unique code is entered in the environment via a keyboard terminal.

Claim 18 (original): The multi-user communication environment according to claim 16, wherein the server provides the unique code to the second user.

Claim 19 (original): The multi-user communication environment according to claim 16, wherein the second user delivers the unique code to the first user by at least one of an email program, a telephone conversation, a handwritten note, a chat room program, direct communication, a instant message program, and a facsimile.

Claim 20 (original): The multi-user communication environment according to claim 16, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer game.

Claim 21 (original): A multi-user communication environment for real-time communication between two users, the environment comprising:

an electronic locking and unlocking means that allows at least one of a real-time open or secure chat.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A multi-user communication environment for real-time communication between two users, the environment comprising:

means to permit interaction with a program before completing download of said program; wherein the program implements the communication environment.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The multi-user communication environment according to claim 22, wherein the program is downloaded in discrete modules and wherein the modules each comprise a different scene of an interactive game.

Claim 24 (original): A readable media having instructions for facilitating communication in real-time between two users in a multi-user communication environment, the instructions performing steps comprising:

allowing the two users to communicate within the multi-user communication environment by selecting from a menu of pre-determined words;

providing a unique code to a first one of the two users, wherein the menu fails to provide for the transmission of the unique code to the other of the two users thus requiring the unique code to be transmitted by the first one of the two users to the other of the two users outside of the multi-user communication environment; and

allowing the other of the two users to transmit free form communications to the first one of the two users upon the other of the two users authenticating the unique code with the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 25 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is a random sequence of symbols generated by the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 26 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 27 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is provided in response to a request by the first one of the two users.

Claim 28 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is valid for a limited period of time.

Claim 29 (withdrawn): A readable media having instructions for facilitating interaction in a multi-user communication environment, the instructions performing steps comprising:

accepting input whereby a user selects at least one of a word or a phrase from a first menu having a plurality of words and phrases;

enabling a second menu comprising a plurality of words and phrases in response to the selected word or phrase in the first menu;

accepting input whereby the user selects at least one of a word or a phrase from the second menu to form a communication; and

transmitting the communication to at least one of a user or a program in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): A method for facilitating interaction in a multi-user communication environment, the method comprising:

allowing a user at a first client computer to select at least one word from a menu comprised of a plurality of words stored on the first client computer;

transmitting to a second client computer an identifier that has been mapped within the first client computer to the select word; and

presenting to a user at the second client computer a word retrieved from a plurality of words stored on the second client computer, the retrieved word being mapped with the second client computer to the identifier.

Claim 31 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein the word is presented by being displayed.

Claim 32 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein the word is presented by being audibilized.

Claim 33 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 32, wherein the words are stored as sound files.

Claim 34 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein the words stored on the first client computer are in a first language and the words stored on the second client computer are in a second language different from the first language.

Claim 35 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein the identifier is transmitted to the second client computer via a centralized server.

Claim 36 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 35, wherein the first client computer indicates to the centralized server intended recipients of the identifier.

Claim 37 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 36, wherein a user interacts with the first client computer to identify the intended recipients.

Claim 38 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 35, wherein the centralized server determines intended recipients of the identifier based upon a condition of the first client computer.

Claim 39 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 38, wherein the condition is indicative of a location of a player character within a virtual game world.

Claim 40 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein the menu is constructed from a pre-prepared library of words.

Claim 41 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 40, comprising accepting input from a user of the first client computer for specifying words from the library of words for inclusion in the menu.

Claim 42 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 40, comprising receiving input from a centralized server that specifies words from the library of words for inclusion in the menu.

Claim 43 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 30, wherein selection of the at least one word is performed by activating a hot key having assigned thereto the at least one word.